



LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Celebrating 26 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

COMMISSIONERS

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Dr. La-Doris McClanely
Rev. Cecil L. Murray
Sandra Rudnick
Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW
Martha Trevino Powell
Dr. Harriette F. Williams

APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **November 1, 2010**, in Room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim accounting or transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

Carol O. Biondi	Steven M. Olivas, Esq.
Patricia Curry	Sandra Rudnick
Susan F. Friedman	Stacey Savelle
Helen A. Kleinberg	Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW
Dr. La-Doris McClanely	Dr. Harriette F. Williams
Rev. Cecil L. Murray	

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Ann Franzen	Dr. Sunny Kang
	Martha Trevino Powell

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:12 a.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Self introductions were made.

III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

- **November 1, 2010**

Action Taken:

On motion of Commissioner Sorkin, seconded by Commissioner Rudnick (Commissioners Franzen, Kang and Trevino Powell being absent), the agenda for November 1, 2010, was unanimously approved.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- **October 4, 2010**

Action Taken:

On motion of Commissioner McClaney, seconded by Commissioner Rudnick (Commissioners Franzen, Kang and Trevino Powell being absent), the October 4, 2010 minutes ([copy on file](#)) were unanimously approved, as submitted.

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Curry proposed to cancel the Commission's regular monthly meetings scheduled for December 6, 2010 and December 20, 2010, and schedule a special meeting on December 13, 2010, to be followed by the Commission's Annual Holiday Luncheon. Additional information regarding the Holiday Luncheon will be provided by Commissioner Williams who has agreed to coordinate the event.

Action Taken:

On motion of Commissioner McClaney, seconded by Commissioner Rudnick and unanimously carried (Commissioners Franzen, Kang and Trevino Powell being absent), the Commission approved to cancel the regular meetings of December 6 and 20, 2010, and schedule a special meeting on December 13, 2010 to be followed by the Commission's Annual Holiday Luncheon.

Chair Curry further added the following:

- The Mental Health Commission requested a joint meeting between the two Commissions. The Mental Health Commission meets on the fourth Thursday of the month; therefore, a joint meeting of the Commissions has been tentatively scheduled for January 27, 2011. Additional information will be forthcoming.
- The 2011 schedule of Commission meetings will be provided by Commission staff as soon as it is finalized.
- Chair Curry along with Vice Chairs, Friedman, Olivas and Savelle met with the Board Deputies last week regarding the data project discussed at the Commission's Annual Retreat held on October 4, 2010. One of the key points discussed at this meeting was ensuring that the data project does not duplicate any existing efforts. Information regarding the Commission's Mental Health Workgroup as well as concerns noted in the Commission's FY 2009/10 Annual Report was also shared with the Board Deputies.

Action Taken:

After discussion, Chair Curry's verbal report was received and filed.

VI. PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION
**Roundtable Discussion on AB 12 and Issues
Affecting Foster/Probation Youth in Relative
Care and How the Commission, County
Departments and Child Welfare Advocates
May Better Support Relative Caregivers**

The following speakers were present for the roundtable discussion:

DCFS

Harvey Kawasaki, Division Chief
Youth Development Services
Michael Gray, Division Chief
Kinship Support Division

Probation

Dave Mitchell, Chief Juvenile Institutions
Placement Bureau Services

Community and Senior Services

Maggie Mireles, Program Manager
Interagency Coordination & Special Projects
Maritza Dubie, Project Manager
Workforce Programs & Special Projects

Parks and Recreation

Mika Yamamoto, Special Assistant
Unincorporated Areas Liaison

Community Coalition

Aurea Montes-Rodriquez
Vice-President

Children's Law Center of Los Angeles

Leslie Heimov, Executive Director

Ms. Heimov reported the following:

- There are two main provisions to AB 12. One is the extension of federally funded care for youth up to the age of 21 which will assist Los Angeles County and the State in absorbing the costs associated with providing support to these youth, and will increase placement opportunities for youth under less rigorous rules or licensure. The other provision under AB 12 is the transfer of federally eligible youth who receive California Kin-GAP to a federally funded program, the Kin-GAP (Fed-GAP) program that will take effect January 1, 2011.
- The transition from California Kin-GAP to the Fed-GAP program is a paper transfer through forms that will be provided to relative caregivers at the time of the social worker's annual reevaluation of the case. The process will not change for those Kin-GAP youth who are not federally eligible. As the implementation of AB 12 moves forward, California will have two Kin-GAP programs, the existing Kin-GAP Program (State and County funded), and the new federally funded Fed-GAP Program. Additionally, under AB 12, the rates used to determine the level of funding will not change.

- Relative caregivers will have a six-month waiting period as opposed to the 12-month waiting period to qualify for the new federally funded Fed-GAP Program.
- Currently Los Angeles County provides care funding for certain youth up to the age of 21 without federal funding, and the County of Los Angeles has approximately 1,900 youth, ages 18 through 20, who receive funding and support from DCFS and the courts.
- The expectation of AB 12 is to assist youth to transition and assume the responsibilities of adulthood.
- AB 12 allows youth easy access to reenter the Fed-GAP Program as long as they meet the following criteria:
 1. Are attending a California High School.
 2. Are attending college, vocational training, or job-training.
 3. Are attending a job readiness program.
 4. Are employed up to 80 hours a month.
 5. Are disabled in such a manner that they are unable to participate in one of the above mentioned criteria.

Ms. Janis Spire, Chief Executive Officer, Alliance for Children's Rights, provided the Commission with a summary of facts for AB 12 ([copy on file](#)). Ms. Spire added that the next step will be to develop more stakeholder documents for attorneys, judges, relative caregivers and child welfare advocates.

The Commission requested staff to explore the feasibility of placing the summary of facts for AB 12 document on the Commission's website.

Ms. Montes-Rodriguez reported the following:

- For the past two years the Community Coalition (Coalition) has been working on efforts to access mental health services for relative caregivers, as evidence has shown that children who are in out-of-home placement do much better with relative caregivers.
- At the request of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, the Coalition developed a program model called the "Community Coalition Kinship Wellness Model (Wellness Model)" that addresses the mental health needs of relative caregivers ([copy on file](#)). The Wellness Model uses evidence-based practices under the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) funding to reduce stress, provide group therapy, and ongoing education for all relative caregiver families, including those who are no longer in the foster care system.

- The Coalition partnered with SHIELDS for Families, Inc. (SHIELDS), a non-profit community based organization dedicated to developing, delivering, and evaluating culturally sensitive, comprehensive service models that empower and advocate for families affected by substance abuse and child abuse who reside in South Central Los Angeles.
- Two obstacles preventing the immediate implementation of the Wellness Model are funding and a permanent location to administer the program. The Director of the Department of Mental Health, Dr. Marvin Southard, met with the Coalition and relative caregivers on July 26, 2010, and indicated there would be additional funds from the Healthcare Reform available to Los Angeles County. Additionally, SHIELDS will provide funds for the implementation of the Wellness Model. The estimated cost to administer the Wellness Model is approximately \$1.7 million.

The Commission suggested that the Coalition, in conjunction Michael Gray, DCFS, and with the Relative Caregiver Committee, explore existing County Department programs to assist in operationalizing and the next steps to the Wellness Model.

Ms. Yamamoto reported the following:

- The Department of Parks and Recreations (Parks) has over 144 parks, golf courses, nature centers and facilities throughout Los Angeles County, and offers several programs for children and families. Several of the parks have community centers, meeting rooms and gymnasiums that can accommodate requests for their use provided they do not conflict with any existing park programs.
- Recently, Parks participated in the Los Angeles County Regional Gang Violence Reduction Initiative, resulting in the creation of the “Parks After Dark Program,” which began in the Summer 2010 and lasted nine weeks. The three participants in the “Parks After Dark Program,” were: the Ted Watkins Park, the Roosevelt Park and the Pamela Park.
- The “Parks After Dark Program” included educational and cultural programming, as well as recreational activities. In addition, there were movie nights, potlucks, concerts in the park, gang interventionist, and youth employment. These programs/activities were successful in large part due to the collaboration between different County Departments such as the Probation and Sheriff, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, as well as the community-based organizations.
- The Probation Department offered parenting classes to “Parks After Dark” participants. The Sheriff’s Department offered the Bicycle Education and Registration (BEAR) Program in which Deputies teach young people, who do not have bicycles of their own, basic bicycle repair and restoration and

advanced safety skills. Youth who passed the program's curriculum requirements were rewarded with safety equipment and the bicycle they worked on.

- Surveys were conducted at the conclusion of the "Parks After Dark Program." Survey results indicated that participants were very pleased with the Program. Parks looks forward to available funding for next summer.

The Coalition identified a City of Los Angeles Park in South Los Angeles that they felt was an ideal location for their Wellness Model. The Commission suggested that Ms. Montes-Rodriguez work with Ms. Yamamoto and their counterparts in the City of Los Angeles to determine if this would be a suitable location.

Ms. Mireles reported the following:

- The Department of Community and Senior Services (CSS) contracts out the majority of its services to community organizations who administer the services required under the federal guidelines for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding.
- CSS operates 17 youth centers that provide occupational, vocational, and on-the-job training throughout Los Angeles County. In addition, CSS has workforce centers for adults 18 years of age and older. These services are intended to be long-term services to help youth with job training and job placement.
- CSS has a sister Commission, the Workforce Investment Board (WIB); of which over half of the Board is comprised of business owners. The Board was recently restructured to include a Youth Council which is chaired by Dr. Beverly Williams. The Youth Council has been working closely with CSS and its partners such as DCFS to increase participation of foster youth in workforce development.
- CSS recently received a \$300,000 planning grant from the federal government to formulate a blueprint for the reentry of young offenders. This particular grant is intended to move collaboration forward between County Departments and the community who are involved with youth. Since receiving the grant, CSS formed six summits and implemented five, thus far. The summits included several County Departments and community organizations that provide services to youth. Over 700 people participated in the summits.

UCLA will draft the Department of Labor Community and Senior Services Young Offender Reentry Blueprint that is anticipated for release in December 2010. A draft blueprint will be forwarded to the Commission.

- Working in collaboration with the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), CSS rolled out a large summer youth program. All County Departments, private institutions and non-profits were involved in providing positions for youth in the summer youth program. This program served approximately 18,000 youth.
- In 2009, the Chief Executive Office instructed CSS to create a youth jobs cross cluster collaborative. Eight County Departments and the Employment Development Department worked on opening up feeders from those Departments and their youth into the CSS' Workforce Program.

The Commission suggested that the CSS work with Parks Staff on developing youth employment opportunities.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, the roundtable participants added the following:

- To qualify for Fed-GAP, the family of the child must be eligible to receive CalWORKs. In addition, the child must be a legal resident of the United States.
- AB 12 is separate from Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a federally funded program that is designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people, who have little or no income. Foster youth cannot receive both AB 12 and SSI.
- Under AB 12, DCFS will have to contact each relative caregiver individually after January 1, 2011. As each relative caregiver's annual redetermination comes up, they will be transferred, if eligible, to the federally funded Kin-GAP (Fed-GAP) Program. Upon assessment, relative caregiver's may request additional funds; however, their funds cannot be decreased.

Mr. Gray reported that DCFS collects basic information about relative caregivers; however, DCFS does acknowledge the opportunity to collect more comprehensive data in the future. DCFS currently collects the following information on relative caregivers: a) ethnicity of youth, b) age of youth, c) caregiver's relationship with youth, d) the number of youth in care, e) the number of youth eligible for Kin-GAP.

- South Los Angeles is a unique population, where many of the youth attending school are living with relatives. The Collation has tried to obtain such data from the Los Angeles Unified School District, but they do not collect this data either. Unfortunately, data is needed to demonstrate a need to provide additional services for relative caregivers.
- The cost to administer the “Parks After Dark Program” was approximately \$400, 000. Funding was provided by the Los Angeles County Regional Gang Violence Reduction Initiative. The program was offered four days a week for nine weeks at three County parks. The program had 25,000 visits, which include many families who participated each night.
- The addition of a monthly informational session about the child welfare system and the courts may benefit the Wellness Model participants. An individualized session may also be beneficial to further help those families in unique situations. Those teaching the information sessions should be people to whom the participants can better relate and feel comfortable when asking questions that they may otherwise not ask a lawyer or social worker.
- There have been concerns that youth residing with relatives are not considered the most at-risk youth. However, during the CSS summits, many parents expressed this concern.
- To access additional data about CSS programs, visit www.worksourcecalifornia.com .

Action Taken:

After discussion, the verbal reports by the roundtable discussion participants were received and filed.

VI. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Ploehn reported the following:

- On Saturday, October 30, 2010, *Kids in the Spotlight* a non-profit organization that exposes at-risk and foster youth to the art of filmmaking hosted their inaugural Kids for Kids Film Festival. The film festival was the culmination of a 10-week program in which foster youth were schooled in screenwriting, acting, casting, and filming from industry professionals. The foster youth who participated in this program created and starred in two to four-minute films.

The event was hosted by the The View's Sherri Shepherd and actor Harry J. Lennix from the television series, "Doll House." Several foster care youth from DCFS and Probation participated. One boy's four-minute film portrayed his and his brother's abandonment by their mother. All of the films were registered with the Writers Guild of America.

Director Ploehn will acquire a DVD to share with the Commission.

- "Rising Stars," an annual fundraising event to benefit foster youth education and the performing arts, will be held on Saturday, November 6, at the Norris Center for the Performing Arts in the South Bay area of Los Angeles.

Action Taken:

After discussion, Director Ploehn's verbal report was received and filed.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

VIII ANNOUNCEMENTS

There was none.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Curry at 11: 44 a.m.